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## BARNAS SEARS, D.D.

IN Saratoga, N. Y., July 6, 1880, Barnas Sears \* closed a long life of public usefulness. For more than fifty years he had done distinguished service in various departments of education, and had won an honorable name in literature and in the pulpit. Like many eminent leaders in political and professional life, he was born in the country (Sandisfield, Mass., Nov. 19, 1802) and was bred upon a farm, and his fine physique and well-poised character owed much to the bracing air and grand scenery of the Berkshire Hills.

The work of the farm was agreeable, and stirred an honest pride in outdoing his older brothers; but he early felt that he was called to a broader life, and must follow public rather than private aims. At fifteen years of age he bought his freedom from his father, and set up for himself; with characteristic energy, employing a man and a team to assist him in building stone walls. In the winter he taught in district schools, and industry with thrift soon gathered the resources needed for his liberal education. He graduated with honor at Brown University in 1825, but deliberately sacrificed the first place in his class to the pursuit of studies not included in the curriculum.

After leaving college he entered Newton Theological Institution, and was one of the three members of its first graduating class in 1827. He was called immediately to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Hartford, and in a brief term of service gave promise of winning a foremost place among American preachers. But discerning friends recognized in him rare gifts for teaching, and as his own tastes inclined more to study than to pastoral work, he accepted, in 1829, the Chair of Ancient Languages in the Literary and Theological Institution at Hamilton, N. Y. He entered on his work with enthusiasm, but soon felt the need of broader culture and better helps than could be furnished by American scholarship, and was one of the first students from the United States to seek the advantages of German universities. He spent two years at Berlin and Leipsic and Halle, and was grateful to the end of life for the inspiration received from German teachers, and especially from Tholuck and Neander. He returned to Hamilton in 1835, but after a few months removed to Newton to fill the Chair of Christian Theology to which he had been elected. For twelve years he was connected with this institution, during the

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\* Notice omitted in Volume XVI.

larger part of the time as its president, and won the enthusiastic love of his pupils as a teacher of singular magnetism and inspiration.

In 1848 he resigned his position to accept the secretaryship of the Massachusetts Board of Education. It was a critical time in the educational history of the State. The Hon. Horace Mann, his predecessor, had introduced bold and radical changes into the school system, and by energy and decision in pushing the changes had aroused a vigorous opposition. The success of the reforms was in great peril. But Dr. Sears, by his conciliatory spirit, by patience in hearing objections and broad wisdom in answering them, soon silenced opposition, and introduced other important changes.

In 1855 he was elected President of Brown University, and removed to Providence to enter on the duties of his new office. The difficulties encountered were many and complicated. His predecessor, Rev. Dr. Wayland, had a national reputation as the most eminent of American presidents, and for nearly thirty years had moulded the character and aims of the college by his energetic will. The Faculty and Corporation were in warm sympathy with his views and methods. Dr. Sears had different views and methods, but could introduce them only slowly, and with wise caution and tact. His administration, however, was eminently successful, and the growth of the college was marked in an increase of students, in a broadening of the range of study, and in the enlarging of its endowment. Dr. Sears was a popular president in the best sense of the word, beloved by the students as a teacher and as an administrator, and ruling less by prescribed law than by moral force.

After twelve years of hard labor, in which his health suffered and his voice failed from a severe bronchial trouble, his physician prescribed rest from teaching as an imperative duty. He had intended to spend a year in European travel and study; but he was urgently requested by Mr. Peabody and the Board of Managers of the Peabody Fund to assume the duties of the general agency in administering that great trust. He had previously submitted to the board, at the request of the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, its president, a plan of operation in the Southern States which commanded a unanimous approval, and it was thought he would prove the best executor of his own plan. He accepted the trust, removed to Staunton, Va., and the last thirteen years of life were devoted to the establishment of a system of free schools in the Southern States. This was probably the most useful part of his life. His commanding person and genial manners and high character brought him into pleasant relations with the leaders of Southern

society, while his broad learning and intuitive tact gave him a controlling influence in removing old prejudices or introducing new measures. He was always heard with deference by the members of State legislatures; his advice was welcomed by statesmen and scholars and educators, and he was a universal favorite in social circles of every grade. At his death the first part of his plan for administering the trust was considered by the board as accomplished; the system of free schools was established in every Southern State. The board were prepared to carry out the second part of the plan, the elevation of the standard of education through normal schools of a high grade. Mr. Winthrop, in a tribute of rare beauty at the funeral services, which was the more welcomed because wholly unpremeditated, said with tenderest pathos: "I am expressing the feelings of my colleagues, no less than my own matured judgment, when I say, that neither among the living nor the dead do we know the man who could have discharged the delicate and responsible duties of this important trust with more conscientious fidelity or greater success."

Dr. Sears was married, Feb. 16, 1830, to Elizabeth Griggs Corey, of Brookline, Mass., who survives him with four children, three sons and a daughter.

He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard University in 1841, and the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Yale College in 1862. He was for many years the editor of the "Christian Review," and an associate editor of the "Bibliotheca Sacra," contributing valuable literary and theological papers to these and other periodicals. He published a "Life of Luther," which had a wide circulation in this country and in England; and in connection with Profs. E. A. Park and B. B. Edwards prepared a volume on "Classical Studies." He edited an American edition of Nöhdén's German Grammar and of Roget's "Thesaurus," with many additions for American students; and prepared a volume called "Ciceronia," with extracts from Cicero and an account of the Prussian method of classical instruction; also "Select Treatises of Martin Luther," with philological notes, and essays on English and German etymology. He was an active and useful member of many learned societies, and a cordial worker in religious and philanthropic institutions.